

Exodus 20:1-3 - Thursday, January 15th, 2009

- Exodus chapter 20 is sort of a famous chapter, in the sense that it contains the Ten Commandments, God's law given to mankind.
- In our study of the Ten Commandments, I think it's critically important we understand that God loves us, and wants what's best for us.
- One has appropriately called them the "tender commandments," because God's law represents His perfect standard for His creation.
- Also, it's important to note that though this was given to Moses, and is often called the Law of Moses, it is actually the Law of God.

THE LAW OF GOD	THE LAW OF MOSES
For us today. (Exodus 20)	For Israel then. (Exodus 21-23)
Written by God.	Written by Moses.
Written for Moral and Eternal purposes.	Written for Civil and Ceremonial purposes.
Drives us to Christ.	Pictures of Christ.

1 And God spoke all these words, saying: 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

- It's interesting that before God gives them the Ten Commandments, He reminds them Who He is; how He is, and what He has done.
- This gives us a snapshot of our relationship with the Lord. It's not based on what we do for Him, it's based on what He has done for us.
- It seems like first, God is telling them that He has saved their lives physically by delivering them out of the bondage of Egypt.
- Now it seems like God is telling them that He wants to save their lives spiritually by delivering them out of the bondage of sin.

- How's God going to deliver them out of sin's bondage unless He shows them first what sin is? That's exactly what He is about to do.
- In other words, how would I know that I've broken the speed limit laws unless you showed me what the law says the speed limit is?
- It's crucial we understand that this is one reason for the giving of the law in the first place. Consider Paul's letter to the church in Rome:

Romans 7:7-8 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet." NKJV

- If God were to just leave us there, He would be cruel, and we would be hopeless. Showing us what sin is serves a greater purpose.
- We now see our sinful condition in the mirror of the Ten Commandments. We've not only broken them, we're broken because of them.
- In that broken state, what's broken beyond repair, now needs to be replaced. That's the greater purpose that the law of God serves.

Galatians 3:19-25 19 What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one. 21 Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. 22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. NKJV

- The law shows us; "us," in that we are broken because we have broken the law, and that we need a "replacement," for the broken part.
- Like a tutor who takes a student to school, so too does the law take us to Jesus Christ. Why does the law need to take us to Jesus?
- Because He is our replacement. Jesus doesn't replace the law, He fulfills the law by replacing us because He's never broke the law.
- That's why His body was broken and His blood was shed in our stead. I've broken the law, and need Him Who has never broke the law.
- Why do we need to understand the purpose for the Ten Commandments? Because, if we don't, we will spend eternity in hell.
- Wait a minute; I thought these were the "tender commandments," now to not know the "why" behind the "what" means we'll go to hell?
- Yes, if I don't understand this, then I won't know that God loves me and wants to save me from the eternal death penalty of my sin.
- As difficult as it may be to grasp, the truth of the matter is that the commandments from God are because of the love of God.

1 John 5:3-4 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. NKJV

- I thought we can't keep the commandments. Weren't they given to us to show us our sin so we can be taken to the Savior?
- Yes, but listen to what the Savior said in the context of sending the Holy Spirit as the helper, and then hopefully it will all make sense:

John 14:15 "If you love Me, keep My commandments. NKJV

- Consider this: "God loves me so He gives me commandments to "keep" me from the burden and bondage caused by my disobedience."
- I in turn love God, Who first loved me, and enables me by the Holy Spirit to "keep" His commandments which are meant to protect me.
- The first five commandments are fulfilled in my love for God, and the second five in my love for my neighbor, which point to the cross.

Matthew 22:37-40 37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets **hang** on these two commandments." NIV

"The great message of the Christian faith is, therefore, that we are free from the Law's condemnation in order that we may be able to fulfill its obligation by the power of [Jesus] within us. ... My obedience therefore is not legal, but inspired by love and empowered by God's Holy Spirit. Does New Testament grace allow a lower standard than Old Testament law? The standard under grace is higher."

Alan Redpath

- So as we now look at the Ten Commandments, let's do so with the understanding of what God's purpose was in giving them to us.

3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.

- The first commandment sets first things first; do not "have any other gods before Me." This may seem to apply more to them than to us.
- After all, these Israelites were born and raised in an Egypt who worshipped some 3,000 different gods. It's really all they've known.
- While we may not know those god's by their name, they are still alive and well today, just under a different name, or a.k.a. if you will.

ANCIENT NAMES OF SOME FALSE GODS	CONTEMPORARY NAMES OF THE SAME GODS
The god Baal.	The god of power.
The goddess Ashtoreth.	The goddess of sex and fertility.
The god of Mammon.	The god of money, and financial success.
The god of Molek. (2 Kings 23:10)	The god of practicality and prosperity.

- Baal, the god of power, Ashteroth, the goddess of sex, and Mammon, the god of money are all very much the gods the world worships.
- God is a jealous God! He's not jealous of us or the other gods before us rather, He is jealous for us because those gods can't love us.
- Not only are we to not have other gods before Him, the fact of the matter is that no other gods can actually stand before Him.

1 Samuel 5:1-5 1 After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. 2 Then they carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon. 3 When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. 4 But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained. NIV

- You could sort of sum up the first commandment this way: "have no other gods before me because they can't take care of you."
- Actually, not only can't they take care of you, you will have to take care of them. You may love them, but they can't love you.
- Do you see God's love in this commandment? God says, I love you, and I will take care of you, because I am jealous for you.